MORE HOME OWNERS TO BENEFIT FROM 10-DAY APPROVALS

The NSW Government has paved the way for further time and cost savings for home owners, by expanding the categories of low impact development which qualify for a 10-day approval under the NSW Housing Code.

The changes, shaped with the help of community and industry stakeholders, will allow new dwelling houses, attic conversions, extensions, basements, garages, carports and rear lane developments to be approved by accredited certifiers rather than via a full development application, if they meet strict design criteria.

Included in the changes is an expansion of the Housing Code to apply to lots of 200 square metres and above as long as neighbourhood privacy and amenity are retained.

The previous minimum lot size for this streamlined approval system was 450 square metres.

A separate code for rural areas is also being introduced including development criteria that have been specifically tailored to account for the unique qualities of these areas.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said the Government is committed to creating Australia’s best planning system and its ongoing agenda of planning reforms was delivering results for the people of NSW.

“Since February 2009, the Government’s exempt and complying codes have saved mums and dads and small business owners time and thousands of dollars,” the Minister said.

“The expansions I am announcing today will extend those benefits to even more people, saving them on average 64 days, and potentially far more, in approval times for new homes or home extensions compared to lodging a full DA with the local council.

“In fact, more than 150,000 extra lots across metropolitan Sydney alone are set to benefit from these changes.

“These codes have freed up council planning departments for important strategic planning activities and significant DAs requiring more intensive merit assessment, while ensuring routine development types are able to proceed with a minimum of fuss.”

The changes to the State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) relating to exempt and complying development codes have been formally approved and will commence on 25 February 2011.

The changes are:

- Inclusion of additional development types under the **General Housing Code** as well as its expansion to a greater number of lots, including small lots of 200 square metres or more;
- Addition of nine new exempt development types such as solar hot water systems, some temporary structures and tennis courts in rural zones, under the **General Exempt Development Code**;
- Introduction of a new **Rural Housing Code** allowing new dwelling houses that meet relevant design criteria to be processed as complying development on rural zoned lots;
Creation of a **Demolition Code** which consolidates the demolition provisions that currently exist under each of the separate codes into the one code with a single set of land-based exemptions;

Introduction of a **General Development Code** which has been created to capture additional development types which do not fit within other codes, with Bed and Breakfast accommodation being the first development type included;

Expanding the existing **Housing Alterations Code** to allow minor external alterations such as enlarging windows and doors as well as attic conversions as complying development;

Allowing complying development on some low-risk bushfire (after discussions with Rural Fire Service) or low-risk flood-prone land, while at the same time maintaining a rigorous assessment regime to manage risk; and

Allowing limited amount of complying development within heritage conservation areas.

Industry workshops will be held throughout the state prior to commencement of the new provisions.